26. A method for generating a video luminance signal comprising the steps of:

deriving three digital data streams representative of the red, green and blue components of an image;

combining said three digital data streams to produce a first luminance data stream representative of the brightness of said image;

passing said first luminance data stream through a low-pass filter that removes higher spatial frequency data and produces a second luminance data stream representative of the low spatial frequency data portion of said first luminance data stream;

subtracting said second luminance data stream from said first luminance data stream so as to produce a third luminance data stream representative of the high spatial frequency portion of said first luminance data stream;

for each pixel of said image amplifying said third luminance data stream by an amount that varies as a function of the value of said second luminance data stream so as to produce a fourth luminance data stream representative of the amplified high spatial frequency luminance data; and

for each pixel of said image summing said second luminance data stream and said fourth luminance data stream so as to provide an output data stream that comprises a finite local enhancement of said first luminance data stream.